

Testimony of Kristen Byrd, Physical Education Teacher

Public Safety Committee

February 7, 2013

HB 5113 An Act Concerning Pool Safety at Public Schools

Members of the Public Safety Committee,

My name is Kristen Byrd and I am a Physical Education Teacher in the Middletown Public School System and a member of the Middletown Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 1381. Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on HB 5113 An Act Concerning Pool Safety at Public Schools.

As you explore changes, I ask you to consider the following:

1. **Limit class sizes** - State's **recommendation** for physical education classes is 25 students per one teacher but this is just a recommendation. To avoid PE classes from becoming a dumping ground and for educators take physical education seriously, the state needs to mandate class sizes. The more students per class increase the liability and an unsafe environment especially in the pool area.
2. **Implement class size limits for the pool area for each PE teacher:**
 - a. 20 students for Advance swimmers,
 - b. 15 students for Intermediate swimmers and
 - c. Less than 15 students for beginners
3. **Require all students to be evaluated by the school nurse before entry into the pool area.** On one occasion in our district, a special needs student had a seizure while swimming due to the temperature of the pool water. The water was slightly on the chilly side which sent him into a seizure.

For the majority of the time, PE teachers do not receive 504 plans, IEPs or even student medical information due to "confidentiality". Having each student screened by the nurse before entry into the pool will help minimize situations like this one from occurring.

4. **Create and distribute universal emergency rescue manuals** so that no matter which body of water (pool/pond) or district everyone is aware of procedures
5. **Institute the following requirements:**
 - a. All students must be tested for their ability to swim; swim testing procedures
 - b. Proper certifications – life guard cert and First Aid/CRP
 - c. Teacher must have communication device (Walkie-talkie)
 - Student should be taught how to that communication device

- d. Additional person to help watch pool area is not required to have lifeguard training (due to the lack of funding) but first Aid/CPR and know and understand the emergency Action Plan.
- e. First Aid/AED visible in all pool facilities (not inside an office)
- f. Emergency Action Plan visible for all to see: Example:
 - Dial (9) to get an outside line then dial 911 (Police Emergency Line)
 - *Request an ambulance (paramedics) and Police/Fire personnel. The call will be transferred to the appropriate line
 - *Give location of emergency
 - *Description of what happen and status of victim
 - *Age and description of victim
 - *Give your name, Job title and work location
 - *Do not hang up until the Dispatcher tells you to hang up
- g. Emergency Phone-only calls 911 -accessible to all and visible (not inside an office)
- h. Post emergency plans should also be visible
 - Contact Nurse
 - Contact building Principal/superintendent
- i. Standard Emergency Response Action Plan ***should be practiced just like a fire drill***
 - Alert Swimmers – universal- 3 long whistle blows
 - Clear pool Area –students need to know where to go (sit along the wall or stands)
 - Maintain Order – students need to know to keep silent (like lock down)
 - Call for assistance – designate two students (just in case one student is there to call for help) and have them pretend to call for 911 using the Emergency Action Plan
 - Perform rescue
 - Alert authorities
 - Follow Up
 - File reports

Thank you. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require further information at 860-638-9439.